

# Career Concerns of Master's-Level Community and School Counselor Trainees

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The authors examined the career concerns of 152 counselor trainees in 7 master's-level programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. Results indicate that counselor trainees expressed considerable professional development, adjustment, and academia concerns while reporting minimal job-search concerns. Students reported concerns of significant importance for specific career tasks anticipated during training and general concerns about exploring their career futures and establishing themselves as new professionals. Results of regression analyses indicated that students with high levels of concern for establishment stage tasks reported significantly higher levels of overall career concerns. Implications for counselor education faculty, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research are delineated.

Graduate counseling students confront a diversity of career-related tasks as they enter and progress through graduate training. Many of these tasks relate to exploring the fit between self and the role of counselor and establishing self as a new professional. Career-related tasks include finding a mentor, balancing life roles, managing stress, narrowing an area of specialization, securing an internship, and preparing for the job search. Often a result of social expectations imposed by faculty, profession, family and peers, the stress of coping with these career-related tasks is sometimes experienced by individuals as career concerns (Luzzo, 1999; Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). There remains, however, a void in the counselor education literature on the career concerns of master's-level counselor trainees. Because more students enter counselor education programs from diverse occupational and educational backgrounds, and because the average age of students enrolling in counselor education is increasing (Clawson, Henderson, & Schweiger, 2003), the career concerns of counselor trainees should be given more attention. This literature review begins with research that sheds light on the career concerns and issues faced by graduate students, in general, followed by a consideration of the research focusing on graduate-level counseling students, in particular.

## Career Development of Graduate Students

Some graduate students have been found to adopt an exploratory posture during their educational experience. This finding has been the result of research comparing the career concerns of nontraditional with those of traditional students and the career concerns of graduate with

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those of undergraduate students. For example, Haviland and Mahaffy (1985) found that nontraditional students reported the perception of more barriers in reaching an occupational goal, more role conflicts, and a greater need for occupational information than did traditional students. In a study by McCaffrey, Miller, and Winston (1984), graduate students were found to be similar to college seniors in their perceived need to determine career-related skills, learn about career options, and use effective career decision-making techniques. McCaffrey et al. have suggested that a substantial proportion of students enter graduate school with unclear career goals. Career exploration can also be an important task for older students returning to higher education.

Graduate students who return to college after years of working or meeting other obligations often find themselves recycling through exploratory stage tasks. For these nontraditional students, this recycling process emphasizes one's adaptability for transitions and coping with unexpected changes through reexamining one's interests, values, and abilities (Savickas, 2005). For example, in a study of the career decision-making differences between younger and older community college students, Healy and Reilly (1989) discovered that many career decision-making tasks "thought to pose minimal concern if repeated during the adult years were reported as major needs by 25% to 35% of the adults over 30 years of age" (p. 544). Although the literature on graduate student career issues has shown cohort differences, counselor educators have generated only conceptual articles designed to assist master's-level counseling students with their career development.

## Career Issues of Counseling Students

There is minimal information about the career development of master's-level counselor trainees. Disciplines such as psychology and education produce generous information on the professional growth and career development of graduate students (e.g., Richmond & Sherman, 1991; Sternberg, 1997). The available career literature in counselor education, however, focuses primarily on professional development during doctoral studies, including seeking faculty positions (Warnke, Bethany, & Hedstrom, 1999), academic hiring policies (Rogers, Gill-Wigal, Harrigan, & Abbey-Hines, 1998), and completing a doctoral program (Boes, Ullery, Millner, & Cobia, 1999). This information appears informative for those students who seek academic positions, yet neglects the developmental tasks and concerns of those who seek entry-level counseling positions.

Counseling students enter training programs from diverse backgrounds and with a range of career-related concerns. Luzzo (2000) stated that graduate students do not all progress through the stages of career development in exactly the same manner or at exactly the same pace. This is likely to be true for counseling students as well. For example, students may enter counseling programs directly out of undergraduate studies to prepare themselves for a new career, or they may transition into a program after several years of working in an occupation that is very different from counseling. Regardless of when and why students enter counselor training programs, the process of self-concept development becomes salient. Therefore, it is important for students to evaluate their personal motives and



professional aspirations early in their training (Hazler & Kottler, 2005). In addition, students are advised that when making early decisions related to specialization, they should become more knowledgeable about the options available and how it will affect their personal and professional self.

This literature review indicates that counseling students may experience some degree of career concerns as they enter and progress through graduate training. In addition, students may find themselves coping with tasks at either the latter stages of career exploration or the initial stages of career establishment. Therefore, counselor educators would benefit from a better understanding of what career issues confront counseling students. Clearly, additional research is needed in this area, and descriptive research on the career concerns and career developmental tasks facing counselor trainees at the graduate level may prove viable.

The purpose of our study was to examine the career concerns of counseling students in seven graduate counselor education programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) at state universities in Ohio. Specifically, this study was initiated by revising an instrument (Busacca & Wester, 2002) designed to assist counseling students with answering the following two research questions: (a) What specific career tasks and career stages are of concern to counselor trainees? (b) Are there differences in career tasks and career stage concerns between community counseling and school counseling master's students? and (c) What personal characteristics or career stages are related to overall career task concerns of counselor trainees?

## Method

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### Participants

The sample for this study consisted of students recruited from CACREP-accredited graduate counseling programs at seven state universities in Ohio. All graduate departments consisted of master's-level community and school counseling programs, while some also offered a doctoral-level counseling program. No other counseling tracks (e.g., student development, rehabilitation, marriage and family) were included in the study because of the lack of responses by students in those tracks or the absence of those counseling tracks at the departments sampled. We contacted a graduate faculty member within the departments to administer the questionnaires to counselor trainees in the respective classrooms.

A total of 203 counselor trainees volunteered to participate in the study. Fifty-one students were deleted from the final database because they indicated both master's and doctoral degrees for their current program of study ( $n = 12$ ); they reported that their current field of study was "undecided," "postgraduate" or did not report any field of study ( $n = 25$ ); or they reported that they were currently a doctoral student ( $n = 14$ ). The final sample consisted of 152 participants, who were evenly dispersed across the seven universities: 1 with 45 respondents, 29% of the sample; 1 with 34 respondents, 22% of the sample; 1 with 23 respondents, 15% of the sample; 1 with 20 respondents, 13% of the sample; and three with 10 respondents, 6.5% of the sample for each.

The majority of the participants were female (82%,  $n = 124$ ), with 18% male. The mean age was 31.65 years ( $SD = 9.53$ , median = 28, mode = 25). Eighty-four percent of the participants self-identified as



Caucasian, 13% African American, 2% Hispanic or Latino/a, and 1% as Asian/Pacific Islander. Forty-five percent reported being currently enrolled in a school counseling track ( $n = 69$ ) and 55% in a community counseling track ( $n = 83$ ).

## Measures

*Career task concerns.* The Counselor Trainee Career Questionnaire (CTCQ), a revision of a previous questionnaire (Busacca & Wester, 2004), was designed to measure counseling students' awareness of, concern about, and importance placed on a common set of career tasks encountered during counselor training. The scale is composed of 50 items that participants rate on a 5-point Likert-type attitudinal response scale, ranging from *no importance* (1) to *great importance* (5). A confirmatory factor analysis supported one main factor labeled Career Task Concerns, which consisted of 32 questions ( $\alpha = .93$ ; 1 question was dropped from the CTCQ due to its extremely low factor loading of .03). The Career Task Concerns scale consists of the four original subscales (Busacca & Wester, 2002) with modifications to the names of two subscales: Professional Development Concerns, Career Adjustment Concerns, Job-Search Concerns, and Academia Concerns.

*Subscales.* The Professional Development Concerns subscale measures the importance placed on understanding and broadening one's sense of the profession and identity as a counseling professional. This scale contains nine items, with factor loadings ranging from .58 to .69, with sufficient internal consistency ( $\alpha = .82$ ). Sample items for this subscale include "understanding the place of multicultural issues in the practice of counseling" and "to gain a better foundation of legal issues in mental health counseling."

The Adjustment Concerns subscale measures the importance placed on personal tasks associated with successfully negotiating graduate training and coping with related stressors. The Adjustment Concerns factor is measured by eight items, with factor loadings ranging from .52 to .82, and has adequate internal consistency ( $\alpha = .87$ ). Sample items for this factor include "find a mentor and understand more about the mentoring process" and "develop ways to balance salient roles in my life with the role of graduate student."

The Job-Search Concerns subscale measures the importance placed on planning for and accomplishing the tasks associated with attaining a position within the counseling profession. The factor consists of six items, with factor loadings ranging from .62 to .84, and has a sufficient level of internal consistency ( $\alpha = .84$ ). Sample items for this factor include "to obtain helpful information on negotiating job offers" and "to obtain helpful skills to establish a job search network."

The Academia Concerns subscale measures the importance placed on acquiring the information needed for establishing oneself as counselor education faculty member. The factor consists of nine items, with factor loadings ranging from .68 to .89, and has internal consistency ( $\alpha = .92$ ). Sample items for this factor include "learning more about the development of a counselor educator" and "learning more about the academic journal publication process."

*Career stages.* As a second and more general way to measure career concerns, we used the Adult Career Concerns Inventory (ACCI; Super,



Thompson, Lindeman, Myers, & Jordaan, 1988). The ACCI measured level of concern with or planfulness for the developmental tasks of the four career stages of exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement posited in Super's life-span, life-space theory (Super et al., 1996). The ACCI consists of items measuring demands, challenges, and expectations that define the tasks. In each of the four stages, 5-item scales measure three tasks. Thus, the ACCI has 12 scales and 60 items. Participants respond on an attitudinal response scale with five levels of concern ranging from 1 = *no concern* to 5 = *great concern*. For the purposes of this study, only the Exploration and Establishment scales with corresponding subscales were used. The highest score indicates the tasks that are of greatest concern.

In a study supporting the validity of the ACCI, Halpin, Ralph, and Halpin (1990) found alpha reliability and Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged between .94 and .95 for the Exploration and Establishment scales with a sample of graduate nursing students. The validity of the ACCI has been supported by other studies (see Cairo, Kritis, & Myers, 1996).

The Exploration scale measures the effort that individuals make to acquire information about themselves as well as possible occupations in order to make a career choice. A sample item is "finding the line of work that I am best suited for." The Establishment scale measures the effort the individual makes to express his or her self-concept in an occupational role. A sample item is "settling down in a job I can stay with." In the current study, both the Exploration and Establishments scales had high reliability ( $\alpha = .95$ ).

*Demographics.* Along with the CTCQ and the ACCI, each participant completed a demographics form that elicited information about sex, age, ethnicity, degree currently pursued and program area of study.

## Results

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To examine the first research question "What specific career tasks (CTCQ) and career stages (ACCI) are of concern to counselor trainees," frequencies were computed on each scale. Scales were categorized based on participant responses. For each scale of the CTCQ, the following response categories were used for this analysis: 1 = *no importance*, 2 = *little importance*, 3 = *some importance*, 4 = *considerable importance*, and 5 = *great importance*. A student who reported a score of 1 (*no importance*) for every item on a scale was identified as having "no concerns." Students who reported a score of 4 (*considerable importance*) on the majority of questions, with at least one question that was reported as a 5 (*great importance*), were categorized as having "great concerns." Students who reported 2 (*little importance*) or 3 (*some importance*) on the majority of the items on a scale were categorized as having "little/some concerns," while students who reported 2 or 3 (*little importance* or *some importance*) but reported 4 (*considerable importance*) on a greater number of questions were categorized as having "considerable concerns." A similar method of coding was used for the ACCI in computing (a) no concerns, (b) little/some concerns, (c) considerable concerns, and (d) great concerns.

To analyze the second research question, "Are there differences in career tasks and career stage concerns between community and school



counseling master's students," we used an independent  $t$  test. The entire scale and subscale scores of the CTCQ and the ACCI were used to examine the differences. To examine Research Question 3, we used a stepwise regression to explore relations between personal characteristics and career stage concerns (as measured by the ACCI) and overall career task concerns (as measured by the CTCQ). For this analysis, we used the entire continuous scales.

### **Overall Career Task Concerns and Career Stages**

Over half of the counselor trainees reported *considerable importance* to *great importance* for overall career task concerns. With regard to career stage, the majority of counselor trainees reported a high level of concern for exploring information about themselves as well as possible occupations. Participants also reported a high level of concern for establishment stage tasks (see Table 1).

*Frequency of career task concerns.* The majority of students reported that overall career task concerns were of *considerable importance* (45.4%) to *great importance* (25%), with 30% of the sample reporting that they were of *little/some importance* (see Table 1). There were no counselors trainees reporting that career task concerns were of *no importance*. When examining specific career task concerns, more than half of the students in the current sample reported that professional development concerns (82.9%) and adjustment concerns (62.5%) had *considerable* to *great importance*. However, when examining job-search concerns, almost the entire sample reported that they were of *little/some importance* (89.5%), with no master's-level students reporting *great concern* for this area. Finally, when examining academia concerns, no students reported that finding information about the world of academia and faculty positions was of *no importance* to them. However, approximately half of the students (53.9%) reported *little/some importance*, whereas nearly half (46%) reported *considerable importance* to *great importance* on the Academia Concerns subscale.

*Frequency of career stage concerns.* Almost half of the students in the current sample reported having "great concern" as indicated in their responses on the Exploration and Establishment scales of the ACCI (48.7% and 44.7%, respectively; see Table 1). When examining program tracks separately, similar percentages of students reported having comparable levels of concern in all areas.

### **Differences Among Community and School Counseling Graduate Students**

We used independent  $t$  tests to examine differences in career task and career stage concerns between community and school counseling graduate students. However, no significant differences were found between participants in the two program tracks on any overall career task concerns ( $t = -1.25, p > .05$ ), career exploration concerns ( $t = -1.00, p > .05$ ), or career establishment concerns ( $t = .71, p > .05$ ). No significant differences between community and school counseling graduate students were found regarding responses on the career task subscales of the CTCQ.

### **Career Stage Concerns and Demographic Factors Related to Career Task Concerns**

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to investigate the degree to which counselor trainees' self-reported career task concerns and demo-



TABLE 1

## Overall Career Task Concerns and Career Stages

Task and Stage	School Counseling ( <i>n</i> = 69)		Community Counseling ( <i>n</i> = 83)		Total Sample ( <i>N</i> = 152)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Overall career task concerns						
No importance	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Little/some importance	25	36.2	20	24.1	45	29.6
Considerable importance	28	40.6	41	49.4	69	45.4
Great importance	16	23.2	21	26.5	38	25.0
Professional Development Concerns						
No importance	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Little/some importance	14	20.3	12	14.5	26	17.1
Considerable importance	36	52.2	48	57.8	84	55.3
Great importance	19	27.5	23	27.7	42	27.6
Adjustment Concerns						
No importance	1	1.4	0	0.0	1	0.7
Little/some importance	27	39.1	29	34.9	56	36.8
Considerable importance	29	42.0	33	39.8	62	40.8
Great importance	12	17.4	21	25.3	33	21.7
Job-search Concerns						
No importance	0	0.0	2	2.4	2	1.3
Little/some importance	62	89.9	74	89.2	136	89.5
Considerable importance	7	10.1	7	8.4	14	9.2
Great importance	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Academia Concerns						
No importance	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Little/some importance	39	56.5	43	51.8	82	53.9
Considerable importance	20	29.0	27	32.5	47	30.9
Great importance	10	14.5	13	15.7	23	15.1
Exploration						
No concern	1	1.4	0	0.0	1	0.7
Little/some concern	17	24.6	16	19.3	33	21.7
Considerable concern	21	30.4	23	27.7	44	28.9
Great concern	30	43.5	44	53.0	74	48.7
Establishment						
No concern	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Little/some concern	17	24.6	18	21.7	35	23.0
Considerable concern	14	20.3	35	42.2	49	32.2
Great concern	38	55.1	30	36.1	68	44.7

Note. School and community counseling groups were master's degree students.

graphic variables could be explained by Super's career stages. Demographic variables were entered first in the regression as a set to control for their effects. Next, the scores on the ACCI scales (i.e., Exploration and Establishment) were entered to examine the amount of variance they explained for career task concerns. Table 2 reports the results of the regression analysis.

When examining demographic factors in Model 1, sex, age, and master's program track were not significantly related to career task concerns. Ethnicity, however, was significantly and positively related ( $\beta = .255, p < .01$ ), suggesting that Caucasian students reported lower levels of career task



TABLE 2

### Hierarchical Regression on Career Task Concerns and Career Stages

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		$\beta$	<i>t</i>
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>		
1 (constant)	112.91	10.55		10.70***
Sex (reference: female)	-6.37	4.84	-.12	-1.31
Ethnicity (reference: Caucasian)	14.93	5.19	.25	2.87**
Age	-0.16	0.21	-.07	-0.79
Program track (reference: school counseling)	4.50	3.95	.10	1.14
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.063			
2 (constant)	57.67	12.34		4.67***
Sex (reference: female)	-3.34	4.19	-.06	-0.79
Ethnicity (reference: Caucasian)	9.52	4.53	.16	2.09*
Age	-0.09	0.18	-.03	-0.51
Program track (reference: school counseling)	4.84	3.40	.10	1.42
Exploration scale	0.22	0.15	.15	1.47
Establishment scale	0.64	0.16	.39	3.87***
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.311			
Incremental <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.252			

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .0001$ .

concerns than did minority students. The Model 1 explained 6.3% of the variance in career task concerns.

Model 2 included the addition of the Exploration and Establishment scales of the ACCI. This model explained 31.1% of the variance in career task concerns. This is a difference in adjusted  $R^2$  of .252. In Model 2, ethnicity was the only demographic variable to be significantly related to career task concerns,  $\beta = .16$ ,  $p < .05$  (see Table 2). Scores on both the Exploration and Establishment scales were positively related to overall career task concerns ( $\beta = .15$ ,  $p > .05$ ;  $\beta = .40$ ,  $p < .001$ , respectively); however, the Establishment scale score was the only variable statistically significantly related to career task concerns.

Because of the significant relationship between ethnicity and career task concerns, we conducted *t*-test analyses examining the differences between Caucasian and minority students. Although this was not the original purpose of the study, the statistically significant difference found in the regression equations warranted further exploration. It should be noted, however, that there was a considerable difference in sample sizes between Caucasian students ( $n = 127$ ) and minority students ( $n = 24$ ), thus these analyses are solely for exploratory purposes. It was found that minority students in the current sample reported significantly higher levels of overall career task concerns and concerns with career exploration than did Caucasian students ( $t = -3.89$ ,  $p < .0001$ ;  $t = -2.28$ ,  $p < .05$ , respectively), with a mean difference of 19.02 for overall career task concerns and 7.45 for career exploration concerns. However, no significant difference was found for career establishment concerns ( $t = -1.27$ ,  $p > .01$ ).



## Discussion

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The present study examined the career concerns of community and school counseling graduate students at seven state universities in Ohio. On the basis of anecdotal evidence from students and a previous pilot study, we were not surprised that respondents expressed significant overall concern as measured by the CTCQ. Specifically, master's-level students expressed significant importance for meeting professional development, adjustment, and academia tasks. These results appear to be consistent with a study by Rimmer, Lammert, and McClain (1982), who found that, overall, graduate students perceived their greatest concern to be in the areas of professional development, career planning, and orientation opportunities. It was surprising, however, that students in the current study reported minimal job-search concerns.

The finding that almost the entire sample expressed *little/some importance* regarding concerns about the job-search suggests that, for participants in this sample, exploring how to attain a position in the counseling profession was not an issue. This appears contrary to the aforementioned study by Rimmer et al. (1982), who also found that graduate students perceived career planning as a primary concern. Perhaps within the programs in which the sample participants are enrolled, job-search tasks may receive adequate attention through faculty mentoring, curricular, and cocurricular experiences. In addition, because many of the participants were nontraditional students, who often bring skills developed in previous career decision-making experiences, they may have perceived that they had adequate preparedness to manage these particular tasks. Alternatively, this finding may be a result of the state of job prospects for counseling in Ohio. For example, the Ohio short-term occupational employment forecast for 2004–2006 shows an increase of 1% for substance abuse counselors, 0.8% for school counselors, 2.0% for marriage and family therapists, and a 2.4% increase for mental health counselors (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Bureau of Labor Market Information, n.d.). It may follow that participants in the current sample may be apathetic about job opportunities in Ohio and therefore express minimal concern for the job search. We did not expect, however, that students would believe they were less prepared to cope with exploring their career futures.

Overall, participants reported a high degree of interests for meeting Exploration stage tasks. Specifically, 78% of students reported *considerable concern* to *great concern* with the efforts required to acquire more information about themselves and about occupations. Because this study did not collect information on participants' current career status, interpretation of these results may vary. On the basis of Niles, Anderson, and Goodnough's (1998) general interpretation of high Exploration stage concerns, some students in the current study may be thinking about exploratory tasks as they recycle into the profession of counseling, re-enter the workforce after a period of unemployment, or express concern triggered by current work and working conditions. Depending on the particular career status of a student, counselor educators can foster an attitude that career exploration is an opportunity to reexamine self in relation to a position in the profession of counseling.



Faculty can assist students who present with Exploration stage concerns. For students who recycle or those new to the profession, faculty can assist by helping them first explore their interests, abilities, and values as they relate to the counseling field before they deal with professional development, job search, or tasks related to becoming counselor education faculty. For students concerned with current work and working conditions, faculty can help them adjust to graduate training or refer them to external support services. Perhaps for more traditional students, high Exploration stage concerns may be related to some anxiety about fitting into or committing to the counseling profession as they adjust to graduate school. As their self-concepts are called into question, some students may be discovering that “the inner world that prompted them to be therapists does not always match the outer world exactly” (Fouad, 2003, p. 82). This echoes McCaffrey et al.’s (1984) claim that graduate-level education appears to be for some “an opportunity to crystallize a career decision rather than a chance to gain advanced training to achieve a previously determined career goal” (p. 130). For students indifferent, pessimistic, or apathetic about their career, Savickas (2005) suggested that this can be generally addressed by fostering optimism, making the future feel real, reinforcing positive attitudes toward planning, linking present activities to future outcomes, and practicing planning skills. Students in the current sample also appeared to be concerned about establishing themselves in a profession.

Overall, participants reported a high degree of interest for meeting Establishment stage tasks. Specifically, the results indicate that 79% of students reported *considerable concern* to *great concern* for the efforts required to express their self-concept in an occupational role. This finding suggests that the ACCI might have tapped into students’ anticipation of the career tasks they will encounter, as well as concerns about adapting to changes in current work and working conditions. Depending on the students’ career status, students who attempt to innovate and move ahead in their current work position, have prior experience working in the human services profession, or who have entered a graduate counseling program from a similar undergraduate major may already possess a clearer self-concept about themselves in relation to the counseling profession. In this instance, counselor educators may help students clarify and prioritize their concerns. To help examine the relations between career concerns and career stages, we used a hierarchical regression analysis.

Results of the hierarchical regression analysis suggest that students with a high level of Establishment stage concerns reported significantly higher levels of overall career task concerns ( $\beta = .40, p < .001$ ). This suggests that students who expressed concern with establishing themselves in an occupation perceived that it was of *great importance* to accomplish a common set of career tasks for successfully entering the counseling profession. Students concerned with career establishment either anticipate tasks related to stabilizing, consolidating, and advancing in the counseling profession or presently cope with these tasks in their current position. This may also suggest that there may be more items on the CTCQ that measure counselor trainee career establishment tasks than there are items that measure career exploration tasks.

Moreover, the hierarchical regression analysis showed that Caucasian students expressed lower levels of career task concerns than did minority



students. These results appear similar to a survey of 1,003 adults conducted by the Gallup Organization (2000) for the National Career Development Association, which found that non-Caucasians expressed more need for selecting, changing, or securing a job than did Caucasian participants.

## Limitations and Future Directions

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Although this study included participants from seven counselor education programs, generalizability of the results is limited by the small number of participants as well as the lack of heterogeneity of the group. Replication of the current study with larger groups of master's-level students is needed. Also, recruitment of more men, minorities, and doctoral-level students is needed to further examine between-group differences. Further studies investigating career stages should include a measure of current career status of participants to aid in determining if they are recycling to Exploration stage tasks. To determine if career task concerns and career stage concerns change as students matriculate through a program, longitudinal studies are required.

## Conclusion

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The results of this study indicate that graduate counselor trainees at several CACREP-accredited counselor education programs expressed significant concern for a specific and general set of career tasks anticipated during graduate training. This study provides an important foundation for identifying career concerns and career stages that students cope with as they regulate their career behavior relative to various career expectations and transitions encountered during counselor training. Although academic accomplishments or skill acquisition remains dominant during counselor training, many students appear to feel challenged as they prepare for, engage in, and reflect on a productive work life in professional counseling. With further research, knowledge about graduate student career development may have implications for counselor training education curricula and cocurricular programs. In the meantime, counselor educators must strive to be more aware of and active in the career development of graduate counselor trainees.

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